



Town of Rockport Epidemic/Pandemic Policy



Rockport, Maine – November 23, 2020

Table of Contents

Purpose.....	3
Applicability	3
Governance.....	3
Objectives.....	3
Key Municipal Operations	4
Amendments to Municipal Operations.....	4
Workplace Exposure	6
Workplace Policies Established by Select Board and Delegated Administrative Authorities	7
Employee Responsibilities	7
A. Employees must immediately notify:	7
B. Presumed or Confirmed Cases of coronavirus in an employee or immediate family member:	8
C. Use of Family Medical Leave Act, Income Protection, Sick Time, Workers' Compensation and Vacation	8
D. Unpaid Leave:	8
E. Stages of Government Shutdown:	8
F. On the job Exposure:.....	11
G. Return to Work: (See Appendix 1 – Follow the Work Guidelines)	11
Guidance provided to all Employees.....	11
A. Absenteeism:.....	11
B. Infection Control Measures/Universal Precautions:	12
C. Encouraging Social Distancing:.....	12
D. Separate Sick Employees:	13
E. Personal Preparedness Options:.....	13
F. Communication Protocol by Administration:.....	13
G. Workforce Involvement:	14
Adoption and Signatures.....	15
Appendix I	16

Purpose

The Town of Rockport hereby establishes an Epidemic/Pandemic Policy, hereinafter “the Policy”, to provide regulation and procedures governing and amending practices, policies, and procedures when criteria meeting the definitions of either have occurred.

It is the Policy of the Town of Rockport to provide a safe and healthy environment for all employees during the threat of all seasonal and other viruses coupled with the potential for a regional or world-wide outbreak qualifying as an epidemic or pandemic virus, as classified by the World Health Organization (WHO) or United States Center for Disease Control (USCDC).

The new coronavirus (COVID-19) is not a flu but a pneumonia-like infection. The USCDC believes at this time that symptoms may appear in as few as two days and up to as many as 14 days after exposure.

This Policy shall address impacts associated with the COVID-19 virus and any such other outbreak.

Applicability

This Policy is applicable to all Town of Rockport regular full-time, regular part-time, on-call, temporary, and seasonal employees whether union or non-union, board members and volunteers.

Governance

This policy is based on the concurrence of information obtained from the Maine Center for Disease Control (MECDC), USCDC, WHO, Emergency Management Agencies (EMA) and Executive Orders and/or Proclamations. Information is subject to change rapidly.

Objectives

The Town’s primary goal is to protect both employees and citizens by limiting cross exposures while maintaining as high a level of service continuums as possible. The Policy seeks to:

- a. Reduce the spread of the disease to and among staff.
- b. Protect people at higher risk for complications from exposures.
- c. Maintain critical operations through the protection of staff.
- d. Minimize impacts on our community residents, customers, and businesses.
- e. Be proactive in the non-pharmaceutical public health intervention measures by taking medically advised measures to minimize risk.
- f. Communicate the objectives of the Policy as measures change.

This policy will be utilized in conjunction with the Town of Rockport Charter, Emergency Operations Procedures, Town Code of Ordinances, Personnel Policy and Collective Bargaining Agreements and all other Town/Departmental operating procedures.

The Policy is subject to change pursuant to Select Board and Town Manager actions should health, emergency orders or other advisories dictate as new evidence is made available.

Key Municipal Operations

The Town's primary goal is to provide services at normal operational levels. There may be a time when Town operations may be reduced because of staffing levels. Essential and non-essential employees will be identified to ensure services and operational support are maintained for the Town and citizens. Remote/telecommuting work will be provided in accordance with current human resources procedures and policies and with approval from the Town Manager.

If remote/telecommuting work is provided:

1. Department Heads must inventory equipment that remote workers will be utilizing. Equipment should be tested remotely for connectivity issues by staff.
2. Department Heads with the potential for working from home should prepare by developing a "ready bag" that they take home with them at the end of each day.
3. All employees are subject to be called back to work during a government shutdown, depending on the need and circumstances.
4. A tracking system will be established for payroll purposes to track all hours worked due to the pandemic.
5. Department Heads should be prepared to backfill positions if employees are absent. Communicate various scenarios with staff to ensure understanding.
6. Town Manager and Department Heads must ensure lines of communication are available for all critical staff and departments.

In case of an epidemic/pandemic outbreak in our community, Department Heads and the Town Manager will be responsible for monitoring health and vacancy rates caused by the virus. Reporting of high illness and vacancy rates must be reported immediately to the Town Manager for monitoring of Town-wide staffing levels. The goal is to continue public services in all facets of municipal operations to our citizens and vendors. However, the Town may be forced to review and seek alternate staffing levels and/or adjustment to operational hours. Any decision to close places of gathering will be based on guidance from the CDC.

Amendments to Municipal Operations

The Town's key objective is to preserve the continuum of municipal services during an epidemic or pandemic event by protecting both the staff and the public through limiting exposures to potentially infected and contagious persons. All municipal services are essential to certain people at any given point in time. Therefore, the preservation of services will be made in all departments

to the greatest extent possible. Special emphasis is placed on public safety, maintenance of public infrastructure, and the financial support of operations. Should staffing become reduced greater than 50% in any given department, additional protective procedures and amendments to operations will be made.

Department Managers: Daily reporting of the number of personnel in each Department will be made, accounting for the number of absences and the reason for absence, vacation, comp time, leave, non-workplace injury, workers compensation, sick and if sick whether the sick time is assumed or known to be related to COVID-19 or other infectious disease as medically assessed.

Tracking will be established to track any illness or other outage associated with the COVID-19 virus. If an employee feels that they have contracted COVID -19 because of their employment a First Report of Injury shall be filed with their Supervisor/Department Head. The First Report of Injury will be immediately filed with the Finance Director by e-mail and phone, including nights and weekends, if the Finance Director is not available file the report with the Town Manager.

An expense account will be established for all departments to track all purchases, contract expenses, testing, cleaning, or other costs associated with viral infections during the performance of operations in anticipation to assess such expense as well as for any reimbursement potential by State or Federal Emergency Management Authorities.

Departments shall maintain a consistent chain of command in the absence of a Department Head or supervisory staff. If the span of command is in danger of being lost, the Town Manager shall be notified for assessment and modification of reporting to maintain services.

The Department Head shall establish the best means of communication to their department staff via text and/or email to provide updates, notices of changed operations, and for notifications to be made timely and efficiently. The means of communications shall be documented and provided to the Town Manager's Office for use in any Department Head's absence.

Alternative work sites and/or provisions to work from home should be made for any Department Head or staff position that can provide at least 80% of services remotely, but only for the duration of the response within this Policy. Any employee may be called back at any time at the discretion of the Town Manager. It shall be the responsibility of each Department Head to verify, test, and ensure competence with the use of these technologies in the event it becomes necessary.

Any complete closures of a department or complete loss of public access to the department shall be made in consultation with and at the direction of the Town Manager.

Any closure of all of the Town Government Operations shall be at the discretion and direction of the Select Board in consultation with the Town Manager, and County, State and Federal

Emergency Management Agencies.

Workplace Exposure

The Town seeks to protect all staff by assessing and addressing workplace exposures as communicated by the WHO, USCDC, and MECDC. Exposures shall be controlled as much as physically possible by following the non-pharmaceutical public health interventions such as frequent handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when ill. The Town will further seek to limit non-employee access into facilities, reduce or eliminate all public hearings and meetings, eliminate the use of facilities for meetings, and by making available to the greatest extent possible the transition of business by electronic means, telephonic means, or the use of mail and drop-boxes.

Each workplace entrance and office entrance shall exhibit upon its entrance the common signage stating “ATTENTION” – a statement of symptoms associated with the viral infection and instructing individuals to “Please DO NOT ENTER” if exhibiting any symptoms. The signage will further display a [Phone Number] and/or [Email] to contact the office for services.

Each office shall establish a six-foot social buffer as possible for individuals to deposit papers, applications, or other materials and receive confirmation of receipt verbally.

Any office needing to take paperwork directly from the public shall wear protective face coverings, remain behind window shields where possible, or otherwise limit proximity for those needing immediate services.

Facilities and staff should utilize approved disinfectant wipes or cleaners on door handles and other public surfaces to lessen exposure. Facilities will increase the frequency and focus of such cleanings throughout the time of this Policy, giving priority to public entrances and/or lobbies.

Staff with increased risk including older employees, and those with pre-existing health conditions subject to the viral infection should identify to the Town Manager for reasonable accommodations to be made. The Town Manager will determine if reasonable accommodations can be made in accordance with medical directives and or workplace safety established standards.

Staff working in public safety, such as Fire and Police should consider immediately showering and changing clothing at the end of each shift (before going home), or for those involved in Fire operations, immediately after being exposed to a potential Person Under Investigation (PUI) to minimize risk of exposure to family members.

No handshaking.

Minimize face-to-face contact.

Minimize meetings following current MECDC recommendations.

Use email, phones, and teleconferencing/webinars as much as possible during a pandemic, rather than face-to-face contact.

Effectively handle materials and customers that could be contaminated. Wash hands often and practice other sanitary means to prevent spread of germs.

If an employee is diagnosed/confirmed positive with the virus, the workplace should be shut down and disinfected before allowing other employees to return.

Employee CONFIDENTIALITY is REQUIRED in accordance with Town Policy and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Workplace Policies Established by Select Board and Delegated Administrative Authorities

The Town Manager will coordinate and consult with the Select Board in making recommendations for any amendments to this Policy. It is the Select Board's sole authority to establish the Policy and to direct its implementation.

The Select Board will consult with the Town Manager to be informed of necessary changes to Operations, increased protective actions for Town staff, and increased awareness of limiting public contact and exposures. The primary purpose is to reduce exposures, preserve the health of the staff, and thereby preserve the highest level of municipal services during the event as possible.

The Town Manager will coordinate any actions necessitating Select Board authorization.

The Select Board shall hereby delegate the authority to the Town Manager to amend this Policy expeditiously in any area addressing exposure to the virus as dictated by either the USCDC or MECDC as an advisory on change in practices. The Select Board further authorizes the Town Manager to close any singular non-public safety department should staffing be so reduced, the service delivery deemed non-essential in the interim, or other extenuating circumstances.

Any reduction in Public Works, Police, Fire, or Emergency Management shall be immediately reported to the Select Board for consideration of amendments as may be necessary.

Pursuant to the Town of Rockport Charter, Article III, Section 5, the Town Clerk shall perform the duties of Town Manager during the Town Manager's temporary absence or disability. Temporary is defined as not more than 30 days.

Employee Responsibilities

A. Employees must immediately notify:

By phone or email only, their supervisor or Department Head, or in their absence, the Town Manager if they have experienced an exposure or received a presumed or confirmed diagnosis of coronavirus, or are exhibiting the symptoms associated with

the virus.

B. Presumed or Confirmed Cases of coronavirus in an employee or immediate family member:

If a medical official determines that an employee is presumed or confirmed to have the virus, then the employee is required to be out of work for a minimum of two weeks (fourteen calendar days) or as defined under the Families First Coronavirus Care Act (FFCA) as subject to medical professional directives. The employee will utilize accrued benefits pursuant to the Personnel Policy, or applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement. Medical clearance is required before returning to work.

C. Use of Family Medical Leave Act, Income Protection, Sick Time, Workers' Compensation and Vacation

Will remain in effect in accordance with applicable Collective Bargaining Agreements as well as Town Personnel Policy. Care of a family member or children not in school is subject to these Agreements and Personnel Policy. A diagnosis of the COVID-19 virus has been determined to be a qualified event for FML and may be subject to a First Report of Injury under workers compensation. Individual notifications and requests for sick time use will be assessed on a case by case basis due to the unique circumstances with no precedent setting actions. Workers compensation provider guidance is subject to change.

D. Unpaid Leave:

If an Employee does not have or has utilized all of their accrued sick and/or vacation time, the employee may request and be granted unpaid leave without pay consistent with current unpaid leave policy and procedures in either the Personnel Policy or applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement.

E. Personal Travel:

Employees must abide by the State of Maine's travel guidelines and/or restrictions concerning personal travel. If an employee travels to a restricted state, that employee must follow the State's quarantine and testing requirements and not return to work until these requirements are met. The employee shall not use federal or state designated paid time-off for this absence. The employee may use earned sick and/or vacation time.

F. Stages of Government Shutdown:

If declared by the Select Board, the Town will pay employees their current hourly rate during any reduction in hours or shutdown of municipal services.

The stages outlined below shall be determined by the Town Manager in consultation with the Select Board. Each stage will not be determined by a set number of active cases of illness at any given time, but the Town Manager shall consider many factors when determining what stage municipal operations will fall into. These factors include orders from the Governor's Office, the number of active cases in the state, county and municipality, the infection percentage in the state, directives and advice from the

MECDC, USCDC, Knox EMA and other municipal and business operations in the state and county. The Town shall abide by all Executive Orders as issued by the President of the United States and Governor of the State of Maine.

A. Stage 1:

a. Operations:

- i. Normal operations for all municipal buildings.
- ii. All surfaces used by the public to be wiped down after use with sanitizing wipes or approved cleaner and the employee must wash or sanitize hands immediately after.
- iii. Professional cleaner to sanitize all high-touch surfaces.
- iv. Plexiglass in all public facing areas.
- v. All restrooms in municipal buildings closed to the public.

b. Other Special Considerations:

- i. None.

B. Stage 2:

a. Operations:

- i. Open to the public with mandated face coverings and maintain social distancing at a minimum of six feet.
- ii. Building Specific:
 1. Town Office Building:
Public allowed in the lobby area or Richardson Room only.
 2. Library Building:
Public allowed as directed by the Library Director.
 3. Opera House:
Public allowed as directed by the Town Manager.
 4. All Other Municipal Buildings:
No Admittance.
- iii. Limit work-related travel.
- iv. All Surfaces to be wiped down after use with sanitizing wipes or approved cleaner and the employee must wash or sanitize hands immediately after.
- v. Professional cleaner to sanitize all high-touch surfaces.
- vi. Plexiglass in all public facing areas.
- vii. All Public restrooms closed.

b. Public Works:

- i. Limit one employee per vehicle.
- ii. Face coverings must be worn when social distancing cannot be maintained or in any public space.
- iii. Employees divided into separate breakrooms.
- iv. Essential resident contact only.

c. Other Special Considerations:

- i. Social distancing and face covering requirements adjust according to directives/orders from Maine State government or federal government.
- ii. Board and Committee meetings may be held through

- videoconferencing, subject to state statutes and/or orders.
- iii. Rotation of staff can be considered to ensure that a department's employees are not all working in the same location during any given day/time .

C. Stage 3:

a. Operations:

- i. Closed to the public. Online, electronic, mail, curbside transactions only, essential resident contact only.
- ii. Rotation of staff to ensure that a department's employees are not all working in the same location during any given day/time.
- iii. Staff (who are able) will work from home when not in the office. This might look different than in-office work and may not be for a full 8-hour day.
- iv. No work-related travel unless it is essential and approved by the Town Manager.
- iv. Public Works:
 - i. In the event of an emergency or weather event all employees are required to report for work with limited in-person contact and must abide to any prior restrictions (ie, separate breakrooms).

b. Other Special Considerations:

- i. Board and Committee meetings may be held through videoconferencing, subject to state statutes and/or orders.

D. Stage 4:

a. Operations:

- i. Office Buildings remain closed to the public.
- ii. No curbside transactions, unless approved by Department Head or Town Manager for emergencies. Online, electronic transactions, and mail transactions only.
- iii. Employees who can, will continue to work from home.
- iv. Only Department Heads will work on rotating schedules as defined in stage three.
- v. No work-related travel.

c. Other Special Considerations:

- i. Board meetings may be held through videoconferencing, subject to state statutes and/or orders. No Committee meetings will be held unless absolutely necessary.

E. Reopening Process:

- a. As the re-opening process begins and continues, the stages above will be followed in reverse order, except that stages can be skipped, i.e., the Town Manager can choose to move from Stage 3 to Stage 1. However, there must be a 14-day time period in any given stage before moving down to the next stage. For example, when moving from Stage 3 to Stage 2, the operations must be in

Stage 2 for at least 14 days before moving to Stage 1. This will allow for observation of the epidemic/pandemic to ensure factors are appropriate to continue the re-opening process.

G. On the job Exposure:

If determined that contracting the virus was a workplace exposure as determined by the Town's workers compensation insurer, the Town will follow the Personnel Policy or applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement.

H. Return to Work: (See Appendix 1 – Follow the Work Guidelines)

Employees utilizing sick leave must provide a return to work with no restrictions note from their health care provider before returning to work. If the employee was self-quarantined due to exposure, then the employee must be symptom free for fourteen days or medically cleared from their health care provider before returning to work.

Department Heads are responsible for being vigilant and watchful of employees who appear sick. If the supervisor suspects an employee has an Influenza-like illness (ILI), the best way to verify this is to ask the employee whether the employee has a fever. If the supervisor believes the employee has a fever, the employee should be sent home, seek medical attention, and must receive medical clearance prior to returning to work.

If an employee chooses to personally travel to a high-risk country or area within the United States and is quarantined before returning, the Town will not pay the employee during this timeframe. The employee will have the ability to utilize any earned leave (sick, vacation, etc.) while quarantined pursuant to Personnel Policy and/or Collective Bargaining Agreement. The Town reserves the right to place the employee in voluntary quarantine under these conditions. In lieu of quarantining, the employee before returning to work and again within three to five (3-5) days of returning to work.

The Town Manager will work with local and state health officials to manage an epidemic or pandemic.

Guidance provided to all Employees

A. Absenteeism:

Prepare for employee absences resulting from personal illness, caring for ill family members, and dismissal of early childhood programs and K-12 schools. Be ready to adapt your departmental operations to maintain critical service levels.

Cross-train employees to carry out critical functions so the workplace can operate when essential staff are out.

Prepare to temporarily suspend non-essential operations, if necessary, and as possible.

Be prepared to differentiate between critical and non-critical services if staff shortages occur due to illnesses or quarantines.

Define how the Department will continue operations during various levels of staff reductions.

B. Infection Control Measures and Universal Precautions:

Place posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at the entrance to your workplace and in high-visibility locations.

Provide soap, water, and alcohol-based hand rubs in multiple locations and routinely refill.

Employees should clean hands often by washing for at least 20 seconds using soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water is not available.

Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact with people who are ill, including shaking hands.

Cover coughs or sneezes with tissues, or other means, then discard accordingly in the trash. Wash and sanitize hands. Ask employees to stay home when not feeling well. .

Employees should routinely clean commonly touched surfaces and sanitize all areas of their workspace daily. Cleanings shall also be done before and after meetings in the conference rooms with sanitizing wipes or approved cleaner and the employee must wash or sanitize hands immediately after.

Take care of yourself – eat well and get rest.

C. Encouraging Social Distancing:

Social distancing is an intervention to increase the physical distance between people and reduce the spread of disease.

Implement policies and procedures for critical employees to work remotely.

The Town Manager can allow telecommuting, if necessary, on a case by case basis and only if otherwise unavoidable.

The Town Manager can permit flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts), if possible, to cover all hours of service provisions.

Ensure that we have the technology and infrastructure needed to support multiple employees working from home.

Place appropriate signage at all facility and office entrances.

Establish employee business travel and training restrictions to minimize risk.

D. Separate Sick Employees:

Employees who report to work having a fever or flu-like symptoms upon arrival, or who become ill during the workday, should immediately be sent home. Ensure that:

All Department Heads and employees are aware of the Town policies and the expectation that ill employees stay home.

Employees should access their Primary Care Provider or Emergent Care Facilities immediately.

Do **NOT** go directly to the hospital or urgent care without first calling and being instructed how best to receive appropriate services. This will minimize the risk of exposure to all concerned parties. If the employee has other health conditions or is otherwise considered high risk, that information must be disclosed immediately to the medical provider's office during the call.

E. Personal Preparedness Options:

Our municipal services are only as healthy as our employees. Employees should immediately take standard steps to prepare for staying at home, if needed:

Store a two-week supply of water and food.

Make sure to have enough prescription drugs at home.

Keep non-prescription drugs and other health supplies on hand. This includes pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold aides, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.

Get copies of electronic health records from the doctor, hospital, or pharmacy.

Try to minimize being in large groups, events and traveling by plane – any direct contact with others you can reasonably avoid will help.

F. Communication Protocol by Administration:

Administration will provide updates to keep the workforce informed about the outbreak, its progression, and any changes in needed responses.

Provide positive, information which will help calm and encourage staff.

Establish clear lines of communication between essential staff members and departments to ensure critical services can be provided

Provide timely and factual information as needed to keep the community informed using the Town’s website, social media, and press releases that will contain information links to relevant supporting governmental agencies and service providers to assist the public.

G. Workforce Involvement:

Ensure that every person and department has reviewed the current procedures and policy for this event.

Every department must test the Policy to help detect gaps or problems that need attention by utilizing “what if” scenarios prior to shut down or events.

Every employee should be familiar with this Policy and be prepared to act immediately if an employee illness or event occurs.

Every employee should know and understand their role if an event occurs.

Every employee provides a level of public safety in their public positions. They should be prepared to increase their responsibilities should outages dictate. The diversity and work ethic of the employees is the most valued resource in implementing this Policy.

References

The following agencies are researched and reviewed for pertinent information relating to current events by primary Department Heads relative to procedure requirements for the Town:

World Health Organization

United States Center for Disease Control

Maine Center for Disease Control

United States Department of Labor – Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Maine Emergency Management Agency

Knox County Emergency Management Agency

United States Presidential Executive Orders or Proclamations

State of Maine Gubernatorial Executive Orders or Proclamations

Adoption and Signatures

The Rockport Select Board approved this Epidemic/Pandemic Policy on November 23, 2020.

Debra Hall, Chair

Denise Munger, Vice-Chair

Mark Kelley, Select Board Member

Jeffrey Hamilton, Select Board Member

D. Michelle Hannan, Select Board Member

Appendix I

COVID-19 Return to Work Guidelines

